

MEETING NOTES

Technical and Community Advisory Committee Meeting #07

Date/Time: May 28, 2013 – 4 PM to 5:30 PM

Location: Minneapolis City Hall, Room 350 South Fifth Street, Room 333

Attendees

Adam Harrington
Allan Klugman
Anna Flintoft
April Manlapaz
Charleen Zimmer
Cole Hiniker
Dan Meyers
David Frank
Dore Mead

Dore Mead
Ed Newman
Erica Christ
Gavin Poindexter
Henry Jimenez
Jen Wendland
Joe Bernard
Joe Surisook

Kevin Hansen
Kevin Upton
Mark Stenglein
Matt Brown
Michael Nelson
Mike Corbett
Peter Wagenius
Steve Kotke

I. Welcome and Housekeeping

- A. Introductions
- B. Approved April 23, 2013, TCAC meeting notes with change: Add Jen Wendland to list of attendees.

II. Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives

Anna Flintoft and Charleen Zimmer presented and discussed a summary of the draft detailed evaluation results. Following are comments and questions from this discussion.

- A. Alternatives evaluated were No-Build, Enhanced Bus, Modern Streetcar and Preliminary Modern Streetcar Starter Line (Nicollet/Lake, Nicollet Mall, to Central/Eighth Avenue NE). There were also two options studied for crossing the Mississippi River: the Hennepin/First Avenue Bridge or Central/Third Avenue Bridge. Anna presented an overview of the evaluation approach and measures.
- B. Goal 1 Results (Connect People and Places)
 - Streetcar starter line serves highest population and employment densities.
 - Measure #1.4: Adjust 46th Street BRT station rating (should be good, not fair).
 - Quality of bicycle connections – Show differentiation between river crossing options (Central near University has constraints)
 - Conclusion: There is no significant difference between alternatives.
 - Comment: More concentration served by MOS.
 - Comment: Streetcar would probably perform better than enhanced bus because of bicycle connections and population and employment served are better relative to streetcar investment if 5 years out.



- Question: Why did project not study a short enhanced bus option (similar to streetcar)? *Response:* Enhanced bus is less expensive than streetcar; therefore, enhanced bus can be implemented all at one time. Follow-up comment: But if short enhanced bus is implemented, it could realize the same benefits as the streetcar starter line.
- Question: How in the future could we make the case for streetcar extensions? *Response:* Qualitative ratings/terms that are used such as “good” and “best” are relative. They do not preclude future extensions. Preliminary results do not argue against a long streetcar, but that a starter streetcar line could stand on its own. Also, other cities have implemented a starter line (typically 1-3 miles) and then proceeded with extensions. Such an approach would allow areas to develop for planning/prioritizing.

C. Goal 2 Results (Increase the Attractiveness of Transit)

- Draft results of measure #2.2 are still being vetted; therefore, they were not presented to the TCAC at this time.
- Range in ridership estimates is highly dependent on what is done regarding background bus service, not uncertainty/error from model
- Question: How does this range compare to today’s ridership? *Response:* The team is preparing ridership information by segment in addition to corridor contributions. Consultant and City are working with Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit to review and prepare this information. Also, preliminary results indicate an increase in one-seat rides (a benefit).
- Question: Is the project conducting a sensitivity test? *Response:* Yes, including enhanced bus. Some features of enhanced bus have been factored into model e.g. off-board fare collection, TSP.
- Question: What is basis of ridership for the northeast area of the River? *Response:* Comprehensive plans. Follow-up comment: This neighborhood is working on revising plans/socioeconomic data forecasts. How do these changes get accounted for in the ridership forecasts? *Response:* These changes have to be part of the Metropolitan Council model. Follow-up comment: It is probably an appropriate input/consideration as part of the economic development measures of this evaluation instead of ridership. Follow-up comment: TCAC member does not see using transportation as a tool for development potential as an evaluation measure.

D. Goal 3 Results (Catalyze and Support Economic Development)

- Development capacity is defined as maximum theoretical based on existing zoning. It is not a timeline nor a ceiling/maximum for what could be achieved.
- May 6, 2013, Developer Forum - Feedback from this forum has been included in this goal/measure.
- Major (transformative development) opportunity sites: Nothing south of Lake Street.
- Infill development is typically more difficult to achieve because it usually involves smaller sites or requires larger investment to “push” through. Segment between Eighth Street NE and Lake Street has largest potential/value for infill development.
- Measure #3.3 – Peer review and developer forum suggest streetcar more likely to spur development than enhanced bus. Presented sub-criteria findings (slide 26). In summary, streetcar ranks as best and enhanced bus ranks as fair.
- Measure #3.1: Segment between Eighth Street NE and Lake Street has the highest capture of development potential.

- Development capacity distinguishes by geography, not transit mode. Therefore, the preliminary starter line between Eighth Street NE and Lake Street ranks as best.
- Comments: An alternatives analysis typically measures performance compared to a No-Build alternative. Project should not suggest/imply that rail is needed to get more development. Note that enhanced bus is not the same as BRT; e.g. enhanced bus is slower; serves different market from streetcar. The process should acknowledge that there are many other important factors that contribute to development, e.g. market, city development policy, in addition to infrastructure investment.
- Question: Is development policy accounted for in this analysis? *Response:* Yes, if it is part of small area plans. If above and beyond these plans, then not included.
- Question: Did developers say something different relative to opportunity sites? *Response:* Developers wanted to know where public priorities are and expressed a desire to have streetcar stop less frequently so they can focus larger development, e.g. at “hubs”.
- Comment: The public also has input on the extent of streetcar’s influence on development, including the willingness to accept dense development.

E. Goal 4 Results (Integrate with the Transportation System)

- Measure #4.1: Information shown is just for the project (Build alternative), not the corridor. TCAC members expressed interest in seeing results for the corridor.
- Question: Is LRT/streetcar crossing at Nicollet/Fifth accounted for in the evaluation? *Response:* Yes, in capital cost for signal interlock at crossing, as opposed to line-of-sight operations elsewhere.
- Comment: Measure 4.1 refers to corridor/system, not just project. Parking and traffic impacts of Build alternatives do differ relative to the No-Build.
- Question: Regarding measure #4.1 – How do these figures compare to other streetcar systems, like PDX? *Response:* Ridership estimates for the Nicollet-Central streetcar alternatives are substantially higher than other cities with streetcar. Also, the Nicollet-Central corridor is different as it replaces bus service.

F. Goal 5 Results (Support Healthy Communities and Environmental Practices)

- Measure #5.1: Most resources are within the starter line segment.

G. Goal 6 Results (Develop an Implementable Project with Community Support)

- Measure #6.1 is covered in Goal 3. Developers thought MOS made sense as starter line.
- Clarified what items are included in the draft capital cost estimates, e.g. right-of-way allowance for acquisition for streetcar operations and maintenance facility, vehicles, track, stop amenities, etc.
- Question/comments: Does the enhanced bus capital cost assume all new elements like streetcar, or does it account for incremental cost only? For example, going from 40’ hybrid to 60’ hybrid should be accounted for and capacity of existing bus garages to accommodate incremental increase in bus fleet as opposed to assuming construction of new facility. *Response:* The capital costs are based on the total cost of vehicles, not the incremental cost, for both streetcar and enhanced bus alternatives.

H. Mississippi River Crossing Options

- Question: Has it been established that a suspension bridge (Hennepin Avenue Bridge) can support streetcar? *Response:* Yes.

Nicollet – Central Transit Alternatives

- Question: Would tracks be fixed on the bridges? *Response:* Yes, that is one option. The team is looking at various feasible treatments on bridges such as direct fixation track (only streetcar will use lane), embedded track (determine if bridge has structural capacity to take on overlay for this treatment). The draft capital cost estimates have a high allowance for this at this level of study. It is typical to refine these estimates as design progresses and they may be revised based on discussions in the next few days with agencies regarding what are feasible/acceptable bridge treatments to accommodate streetcar.
- Comment: An argument should be made regarding getting more people to use transit, out of their cars. *Response:* The team will look at what information is readily available in the ridership model such as the change in vehicle miles travelled. Also, one of developers from the May 6th form said that he did not think people would necessarily give up a car but they might leave the car in garage longer/more days.

III. Next Steps/Other

- A. June 10, 2013, PAC meeting to present detailed evaluation results (2-4 PM)
- B. Public open houses planned for July 2013 – Present detailed evaluation results
- C. Schedule for LPA adoption
 - Come up with LPA recommendation ASAP for open house in July.
 - City Council LPA recommendation late summer.
 - Is committee interested in meeting next week to prepare for PAC meeting and to discuss results more closely?
 - Anna is going on leave June-August; Charleen will act as City's project manager in Anna's absence.
- D. Funding Strategy/Update – Peter Wagenius
 - Minneapolis secured legislative authorization for a pilot project for value capture for streetcar. TIF for Transit did not get broad approval for cities so narrowed the proposal to the Nicollet-Central corridor and specified six properties to be included in the value capture district. This is a more flexible tool than TIF. It is expected to generate revenues to allow bonding of \$50-60 million to be used for streetcar in the Nicollet-Central corridor.
 - How quickly can the City move forward? *Response:* We expect City Council action in the next two months.
 - It is important to keep door open for other funding sources/tools, e.g. TIGER V.
 - Question: Value capture revenues cannot be used for enhanced bus? *Response:* That is correct.
 - Question: What areas are included in the value capture district? Why "pilot project"? *Response:* Specific to six properties only; 5 of 6 are adjacent to corridor; one property is one block away. Near-term, the funds could be used to pay for design and right-of-way acquisition. There is a lot of flexibility in how the funds can be used. It is called a "Pilot Project" so that it can be evaluated on how well it works and how it might be tweaked to function better.
 - Question: When could it be used? *Response:* If adopted by July, can use the growth in funds generated after January 2012. Approving the District does not commit to spending the funds. It just sets the base year and establishes the district.

- Question: Is it comparable to a TIF? *Response:* Yes, in terms of capturing value, but it is not the same in terms of the process required for TIF or the use of the funds. It is less speculative than TIF because it is limited to properties that we already know will be developed
- Question: How does this affect overall timeline? How long before value captured? *Response:* If the district is approved by the end of June, then funds would be available starting in 2014.